Minutes Swanley District AGM, 24th September, 2025

8pm Horton Kirby HQ

Clive Taylor, retiring Chair, opened the meeting and welcomed all present, including county guests, Des Harris, County Chair, and Jack Liddon, County Support Team Lead.

Present; see separate list.

Apologies for absence: Nick Allen

The model constitution from Policy, Organisation and Rules (POR) was adopted.

The district's financial year was noted as 1st May- 30th April.

It was agreed that maximum number of trustees on the trustee board would be eight.

The quorum for the meetings of the District Scout Council was agreed as eight.

The District Lead Volunteer gave the review of the last year. A slide presentation of photographs of our members engaged in a variety of interesting and exciting activities was shown. Jane Blake was presented with a 30 years Length of Service Award.

Des Harris thanked everyone involved in the District for all their efforts for Scouting. He presented a Bronze Grow 50 Award to Crockenhill Group and Growth Awards to Eynsford and Farningham and 1st Kingsdown Groups.

The Annual Report of the District Trustee Board and the Annual Statement of the Accounts (audited) were presented and accepted.

Clive Taylor stepped down as District Chair and the position remains vacant.

Nick Allen was re-appointed District Treasurer.

Perry Cole was appointed as a Trustee for a three-year term.

Alan Clisby was appointed as the Scrutineer.

The meeting was closed.

Swanley District Scout Council Accounts 2025-6

Registered Charity Number 1202145

INCOME		**EXPENDITURE**	
Membership incomes 2024/5	£3,303.00	Section Event funds combined	-£505.49
Grants	£0.00	Campsite	-£108.01
7th Swanley	£2,797.01	Online Scout Manager	-£1,161.00
2025 – St Georges Day	£244.09	Meeting Expenses	-£155.88
Membership incomes 2025/6	£38,545.50	2026 – St Georges Day	-£1,485.45
Swanley 100 (Fundraiser)	£100.00	Website & emails	-£157.00
Donations	£130.00	2025/6 membership County & National	-£32,233.50
Badges – transfers from Badge account	£504.51	Miscellaneous	-£768.73
		Cubs on the Water	-£193.26
		AGM	-£10.48
		2027 World Scout Jamboree	-£1,316.33
		District Camp	-£6,395.00
		Interest & Bank Charges	-£3.90
TOTAL INCOME	**£45,624.11**	**TOTAL EXPENSES**	**-£44,494.03**

Income less expenditure = £1,130.08

Reserves Policy – no less than the Membership paid out to County and National (£33,000)

Balance Sheet for the year ended 30/04/2026

Start of year = 01/05/2025		**End of year = 30/04/2026**	
Cash in hand with treasurer	£25.66	Cash in hand with treasurer	£0.00
CAF Current account	£0.00	CAF Current Account	£1,388.61
CAF Savings Account	£0.00	CAF Savings Account	£47,059.63
Barclays Current	£45,290.39	Barclays Current	£749.09
Explorers Banked + Cash	£0.00	Explorers Banked + Cash	£0.00
Campsite Cash held by Warden	£0.00	Campsite Cash held by Warden	£0.00
Badge Secretary Barclays	£2,756.20	Badge Secretary Barclays	£5.00
Total at year start	**£48,072.25**	**Total at end of year**	**£49,202.33**

Balances at end, minus balance at start **£1,130.08**

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Swanley District Scouts

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Swanley District Scouts for the year ended 30th April 2026.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Swanley District Scouts you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Swanley District Scouts accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Swanley District Scouts as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: 

Name: Alan Clisby

Relevant professional qualification or membership of professional bodies (if any):

Address: 41 Pincroft Wood, New Barn, Longfield, Kent DA3 7HB

Date: 11th August 2026

Swanley District Annual Review May 2025-April 2026

With many of the initial issues with the "new" record system having been adjusted to, although there are still a lot of issues with the quantity of records and procedures required, Swanley District has continued to make progress. Four of our ten groups currently have Squirrel sections and there is growth in member numbers in all sections, apart from Scouts. Where numbers drop, it is often due to the lack of sufficient leaders, not children, although each group has its own unique situation and local demographics, which are having an impact. Our new group, 7th Swanley, consolidated its position and won a Silver Grow 50 award from the county, which means that it added at least 25 members. The Squirrel section is in abeyance, as we need to recruit a leader team for the section, and 7th needs leaders to enable it to start Scouts. Eynsford and Farningham group gained a Bronze award (at least 10 net new members).

There is a need for a new Explorer unit in the Swanley area, as the only provision is Vikings, which meets at 2nd Swanley HQ, and it is very full. Network is in its early stages of recommencing. All groups currently have Group Lead Volunteers. We have said "goodbye" to some and "hello" to others over the year. The role of the GLV is pivotal for a group and the demands from HQ increase each year, so thank you all of you for all that you do and for keeping up with what can be sudden requests.

All sections enjoy very varied and quality Scouting, with a wide range of age-appropriate activities, as you will see from the slides on display at the AGM. Inclusion, and learning about inclusion and adaptation, is a high priority, as post-Covid, there are a lot of needs among all section ages and we have a number of young and adult members with neuro-diversity, who benefit from everything that Scouting has to offer. Kent County Scout team has a very helpful and competent inclusion team, whose expertise we draw on.

We have been very busy presenting Chief Scout's Awards from Acorns upwards, which is a key indicator of the variety and quality of our offering: we have some Explorers aiming for the King's Scout Award.

All groups have demonstrated Scouting service, engaging in many Community Impact projects, among them litter-picks, donating to the foodbank, providing activities and refreshments at village events and raising funds for their chosen charities through sales of poppies, home-made goods etc and sponsored events. Some of our Scouts hold the top Scout Volunteering Award for individual service and some Beavers and Cubs have been volunteering as individuals, as well as within their groups. Groups are planning to join the Kent Scouts' sleepout for Porchlight, the Kent charity for homeless people, taking place this year. We are proud of our service and the awareness of the needs of others that it raises and it is an important part of how our Promise differentiates us from other youth groups.

More Leaders gained Nights Away Permits, creating more resilience in our nights away offering throughout all groups in the district. Most sections experienced one night or more away, from sleepovers in HQs for the youngest members to the older sections going to HMS Cavalier and various campsites throughout the calendar year. Explorers and Scouts attended the 2025 Kent International Jamboree. Explorers went to The Lower Grange Farm Big Weekend and Gilwell Scarefest.

We have chosen our candidates for the World Scout Jamboree, to be held in Poland in summer 2027. We were allocated 5 spaces, requiring total funding of £18,000. The district must underwrite the

total amount, which is a huge commitment. Learning from the Korean Jamboree experience, we had a thorough selection process, including on how funds were to be raised, and our candidates are working hard to raise money with face painting, selling refreshments at community events, making and selling goods and any other appropriate way that they can. It is possible to donate to their efforts via the JustGiving page on the district website.

There are opportunities for our older Scouts and leaders to travel abroad with Scouts in other ways. Last financial year, two leaders went to Botswana and one to the Arctic on Kent Scouts' trips. Explorer Scout, Lucas Stephenson, will be presenting to the AGM about his trip this year to Ghana. I would like to find ways to help more of our members to be able to participate in overseas events.

Environmentally-focussed activities have featured, with increasing urgency on future sustainability and travel to the Jamboree will be overland in line with this emphasis.

The district St George's Day at Parkwood Hall Academy was well received and offered lots of fun activities for members of every section and their families. Other district events included Cubs on the Water, Beaver District Sleepover and Mole Trophy competition and Scout Mechanics badge day. Sections took part in some of the many county events.

Our leaders and helpers have worked tirelessly to provide activities and memorable opportunities. Some have contributed to events outside the district as adventurous activity permit holders and in other ways. Without them all, there would be no Scouting, no life-changing opportunities for our young people and far less fun in Swanley district. Congratulations to those who have gained merit and long service awards this year. A heartfelt thank you to you all, in group or district roles or, probably, both.

The trustee board meets regularly. The role of the district trustee board is to manage the resources well, ensuring that the district runs safely and legally, and plan for the future. Previously, we have looked at issues such as the prevalence of reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) in group buildings and, going forwards, are continuing to embed the safety and compliance areas. We would welcome more members of the trustee board and, in particular, are looking for someone to chair this important team and people with an interest in risk.

One area that the trustee board is supporting, is the acquisition of suitable hall facilities for a Scout group/s in the main part of Swanley, where there is proven need for a group, and to provide a district HQ with space to store property. The lack of storage space leads to issues with keeping track of and accessibility to equipment. We hope to build a new group and district HQ in Swanley Park and are looking for major funding to help achieve our goal. It is not the sort of project for which we can fundraise in the traditional way, as the estimated costs are way out of our reach. We need to be successful in our bids for local and national funding and attract donations of materials and reduced or free expertise. If anyone is able to join our project team or point us in fruitful directions, we would welcome their input. Thank you to our current trustee board members for all that you do.

Frances Wallace, District Lead Volunteer

Compliance & Volunteer Support Review – Swanley District

May 2025 to April 2026

We continue to make excellent progress in respect of compliance matters and it is now rare for Swanley District Scouts to have a month in which the District is 'non-compliant'.

Some compliance challenges for Groups across the District still remain – notably in the timely and accurate reporting to the Charity Commission of Group Trustee Annual Reports (TARs) and Accounts. This is of concern, as proper reporting is a legal requirement for charities, and we must all work towards ensuring that ALL Groups submit their Trustees' Annual Reports and Accounts promptly.

Across the District, compliance standards for individual learning/training is very good and there were only a very few volunteers who were not fully 'up to date' with their learning/training at the year end. Most were new volunteers who had very recently joined Groups and had yet to fully complete their mandatory training. Certainly, Swanley District Scouts is performing considerably better than most Districts, and we should be proud of our success in this area.

The 2026 Scouts Census was completed on time and, as a District, our Youth Membership grew by 6% to 565. This continues the pattern of consistent growth since 2020. We have shown an average of 5.3% annual growth in the numbers of Young People since 2020. Sadly, as is the case nationally, adult support (uniformed and non-uniformed) has continued to fall, making it very difficult for some Groups to operate effectively. That means that our Young People are possibly not getting the fullest possible experience of Scouting, despite the very real efforts of those Adults who volunteer at Groups and District.

On a more positive note, our newest Group, 7th Swanley, continue to do extremely well, demonstrating that by re-introducing Scouting to areas where Scouting has been absent for quite some time can have a significant and positive impact on the neighbourhood and its youth.

We are still working towards securing a suitable development area for a new Scout premises which will also double-up as the District HQ. The Project Group for this is being led by Mark Price-Haworth.

Peter Lewis,
District Support Team Leader & Compliance Officer.

Trustees' Annual Report

Swanley District

May 2025 to April 2026

Our Role as Trustees

As Trustees of Swanley District Scouts, we act collectively, ensuring the district operates in line with charity law, Scouts' Policy, Organisation & Rules (POR), and data protection (GDPR). Our primary responsibility is to act in the charity's best interests, and ensure all policies, including safeguarding, equal opportunities, and safety, are effectively implemented whilst maintaining confidentiality throughout. Currently there are eight Trustees appointed.

To the best of our knowledge and belief, we have fully complied with the Constitution of Swanley Scout District and have applied that compliance across all Groups which form part of Swanley District Scouts.

The trustee board meets regularly. We would welcome more members of the trustee board and, in particular, we are looking for someone to chair this important team and anyone who has an interest in risk management.

Compliance

A key responsibility of the Trustee Board is to ensure that everyone (uniformed and otherwise) remains 'compliant', and that training and development of individuals is both available and encouraged across the District. I am pleased to report that we have an excellent compliance record and that there have been no major breaches over the period of the review. Safety and Safeguarding procedures remain at a very high standard throughout the District.

In recent years there have been 'issues' over the implementation of the Scouts' 'new' record system for adults, but improvements by the Scout Association are slowly being made and Swanley District has successfully embraced those changes. Further development changes are expected going forward, and we will need to adapt our local procedures, as and when they occur, to ensure compliance is maintained.

We fully complied with the requirement to submit our Trustees' Annual Report (TAR) and Financial Accounts for the 2024/25 financial year within the timeframe permitted and there is no reason why the current set of accounts etc should not be submitted in accordance with the requirements of the Charity Commission as soon as possible after the current AGM is concluded.

Growth

Youth numbers across the District have grown by about 6% to 565. Over the last five years there has been an average of 5.3% annual growth which is very pleasing. Disappointingly, but much in common with

national statistics, adult support (uniformed and non-uniformed) across the District has fallen, making it very difficult for some Groups to operate effectively. This has a major impact directly on the Scouting experience for our Young People and a key objective must be to try to reverse the declining adult numbers going forward.

Financials

Financially, the District is secure and there are no concerns. Our accounts show a small surplus of £1,130 over the accounting period, and that increases our financial asset base to a total of £49,202, most of which is held in an interest-bearing savings account. We have changed our bankers during the year to increase the returns on our investments and to provide easier access to funds. More information can be found in the Financial Accounts which form part of the AGM Pack.

Projects

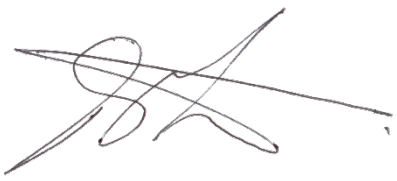
As a District, due to the lack of storage facilities and no 'District HQ' premises, we maintain a very limited amount of District equipment and, out of necessity, that is stored across various Groups. Fortunately, our Groups are normally very supportive in that respect. Nevertheless, a key project of the District is to build premises to support both a new group and a district HQ with storage in Swanley Park. We need major funding support for this project as it is way beyond our resources, and traditional fund-raising methods will not produce the required capital to achieve our aims. We need to be successful in our bids for local and national funding and attract donations of materials and reduced or free expertise.

Awards etc

There have been a significant number of awards given to both our young people and adults over the past year and in addition, we are delighted to see that we have some Explorers aiming for the King's Scout Award. We wish those Explorers every success!

Swanley District have also selected our five candidates for the World Scout Jamboree, to be held in Poland in summer 2027. This is an additional, hopefully temporary, funding burden on the District. We are required to underwrite the costs (£18,000) whilst those selected candidates undertake their own fund-raising. The Trustees have agreed to support the underwriting of those costs.

For the Trustees of Swanley District



Peter Lewis

Trustee